(c) if so, the details in this regard and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Arms and ammunition worth Rs. 3065.53 crore were contracted with overseas suppliers during the last three years for the Armed forces. It will not be in the interest of national security to divulge details of the suppliers and revenue implications in respect of each supply.

(b) and (c) In the light of certain reports about alleged payment of agency commission by M/s Denel, South Africa, for facilitating contracts, a decision has been taken to initiate action to cancel all contracts entered into with M/s Denel.

Defence deal by India and US

1777. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and US set to sign landmark Defence deals which include guarding of sea lanes in this region;

(b) whether the issue of supplying F-18s to India came up for discussion during his recent visit to US?

(c) if so, what is the outcome of the meeting with regard to supply of F-18s to India; and

(d) what are the detailed agreements that India and US entered into during Prime Minister's visit to US?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) A document entitled 'New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship' was signed on June 28, 2005, during Raksha Mantri's visit to the United States of America (USA). RM had made a *Suo Motu* Statement on the document in the Rajya Sabha on August 2, 2005. While the document identifies the protection of commerce by land, sea and air as a shared security interest, and encourages promotion of defence trade and technology as major objectives, it does not refer specifically to guarding of sea lanes in the Indian Ocean region.

(b) and (c) There were no discussions on the supply of F-18s to India during the visit.

(d) The Prime Minister made a *Suo Motu* Statement in the Rajya Sabha on July 29, 2005 on his visit to the United States. No agreement was signed during the visit.

Exemption of Defence vehicles from toll tax

1778. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that vehicles of Defence departments are exempt under the India Tolls (Army and Airforce) Act, 1901 from toll taxes;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the toll collection agency on the Delhi-Noida (NCR) flyway has been collecting tolls from the Defence vehicles despite this exemption;

(c) the reasons for allowing the toll collectors to ignore the law of the land;

(d) the details of other toll bridges/roads where Defence vehicles are made to pay tolls; and

(e) what actions are contemplated, if any, in order to prevent toll collection from Defence vehicles passing through Delhi-Noida flyway?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The provisions of the Indian Tolls (Army and Air Force) Act, 1901, exempt Defence vehicles from the payment of tolls.

(b) and (c) The Noida Toll Bridge Company Ltd. collects fees from Defence vehicle using the bridge. A case was taken up with the Noida Toll Bridge Company Limited to exempt defence vehicles, who have informed that the concession Agreement executed by the Company with the Noida Authority does not provide for any exemptions and also that they incur substantial costs in relation to the operation, maintenance and repair of the Bridge. Any exemption would require concessions from the Government according to Section 6 of the Indian Tolls (Army and Air Force) Act, 1901.

(d) No specific case has come to notice.

(e) In view of the concession agreement, no further action can be taken.